Jessica Gladden Papers 1967-2007
MS33

Finding aid prepared by Anita Carrico

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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Summary Information

Repository	Enoch Pratt Free Library Special Collections
Title	Jessica Gladden Papers
Date	1967-2007
Extent	2.0 Linear feet 2 boxes
Language	English
Abstract	The Vivien Thomas-Jessica Gladden Papers document a unique relationship between Gladden, a high school teacher, who went on to write a Master's thesis in American History at Morgan State University, and her work to document the medical accomplishments of Vivien Thomas. Although Mr. Thomas only had a high school diploma, he developed many surgical techniques and instruments to combat diseases. Also included is an audio interview between Mrs. Gladden and Mr. Thomas as well as Gladden's papers and publications about Thomas.

Biographical/Historical note

Jessica Gladden Biographical History:

Jessie Benjamin Gladden was born on December 11, 1930 in New York City. Her mother was a domestic and later a business owner, and her father was a laborer. During her adolescent years, Gladden's mother moved the family back to her native North Carolina where she operated a restaurant and a store. In 1948, Gladden earned her high school diploma from North Hampton County Training School in North Carolina. In 1953, she earned her bachelor's of science degree in social science and English.

Jessie Gladden began her teaching career in 1956 at Charles Hamilton Houston elementary school in Baltimore, where she taught for the next five years. After taking time off to raise her family, Gladden returned to the classroom in 1969, teaching at Pimlico Middle School until 1971. From 1973 until 1974, Gladden traded in her chalk and eraser for a camera and studio audience when she taught for the show Newslab that aired on Maryland Public Television. In 1973, she earned her master's degree in American history from Morgan State University.

Jessie Gladden's master's thesis highlighted the medical accomplishments of Morgan State University medical scientist, Vivien Thomas. Thomas, with only a high school education, developed many surgical techniques and instruments used in treating and identifying diseases. Gladden's thesis was titled, Vivien Thomas: Black Non-Doctor. From 1977 until 1997, she worked as a supervisor for Baltimore City Schools social studies curriculum. She retired from the Baltimore City School system in 1992. The following year, she took a position as a teacher supervisor at Johns Hopkins University until her retirement in 2001.

Gladden was married to Elzee Gladden, a Baltimore City educator who served as principal of Baltimore's Dunbar High School and was the first person to receive a doctorate degree from Morgan State University. She has two children: Maryland State Senator, Lisa Gladden and Marc Gladden. Jessie Gladden was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on August 25, 2004.

Vivien Thomas Biographical History:

Vivien T. Thomas played a key role in devising the famous 1944 “blue baby” operation at Johns Hopkins Hospital even though he lacked a college degree. In 1944, when Dr. Alfred Blalock and Dr. Helen Taussig earned worldwide fame with their first so-called “blue baby” operation, Mr. Thomas was looking on and giving advice, having already performed the operation to bypass constricted vessels leading from the heart, 300 times..on dogs. Mr. Thomas was forced to withdraw from college when the Depression wiped out his savings. Although lauded by the doctors with whom he worked, he is little known today. He was awarded an honorary doctor of laws degree in 1976.

Scope and Contents note

The collection contains primarily correspondence associated with Jessie Gladden's research for her Masters thesis which was presented to Morgan State College in 1973. It also contains an audio interview between Mrs. Gladden and Vivien Thomas.

Arrangement note

Series Description:

I. Correspondence from Mark M. Ravitch, MD, Dr. Blalock's biographer, 1967 II. Vivien Thomas' portrait presentation, 1971; III. Jessica Gladden thesis with Subseries 1: Interview; Subseries 2: Letters to Jessie Gladden in response to her inquires; Subseries 3: Thesis publication; IV. Spark Media; V. Jessie Gladden papers, 1974-2005; VI. Publications about Vivien Thomas, 1973-2007; VII. Miscellaneous papers.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Enoch Pratt Free Library Special Collections February, 2008

Revision Description

Enteredt into Archivist's Toolkit by Joan M. Wolk September, 2015

Conditions Governing Access

Unrestricted, open by appointment.

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Jessica Gladden’s collection of research material includes correspondence from the Hopkins doctors with whom he worked, typescripts and audio of interviews with Mr. Thomas, and papers from her years as a promoter of his achievements. The material was generously donated to Special Collections in 2007.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- African American women teachers.
- Baltimore City Public Schools.
- Johns Hopkins University.
- Morgan State University .
- Newslab.

Occupation(s)

- African American women teachers

Personal Name(s)

- Blalock, Alfred, 1899-1964
- Gladden, Elzee
- Gladden, Jessica
- Gladden, Lisa
- Taussig, Helen B. (Helen Brooke), 1898-1986
- Thomas, Vivien T., 1910-1985

Subject(s)

- Blue baby
- Operation
- Surgery
- Tetralogy of Fallot

Collection Inventory

Series I: Correspondence from Mark M. Ravitch, MD, Dr. Blalock's biographer, 1967	**Box** 1	**Folder** 1-2
	Box	**Folder**
Letter to Vivien Thomas from Mark M. Ravitch, MD, University of Chicago, Department of Surgery, June 12, 1967.	1	1
Copy of letter to Rowena Spencer, MD, New Orleans, from Mark M. Ravitch, MD, June 12, 1967.	1	2
Series II: Vivien Thomas' portrait presentation, 1971.	**Box** 1	**Folder** 3-6
	Box	**Folder**
Copy of letter to David E. Rogers, MD from J. Alex Haller, Jr., MD, Robert Garrett, Professor of Pediatric Surgery, JHU, February 5, 1971.	1	3
Presentation of a portrait of Vivien Thomas, February 27, 1971. (partial program)	1	4
Under the Dome, A publication for the employees of the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions. "Hopkins Headache Man Honored", Volume 21, Number 2, March 1971.	1	5
Letter to Jessie Gladden from Vivien Thomas, November 23, 1971.	1	6
Series III: Jessica Gladden thesis	**Box** 1-2	**Folder** 7-26

Subseries 1: Interview	Box 1	Folder 7-11
	Box	**Folder**
Typescript of interview with Vivien Thomas by Jessie Gladden, February, 1972. (2 copies)	1	7
Tape of interview with Vivien Thomas by Jessie Gladden, February, 1972. Cassette tape, tape recording and CD.	1	8
Thesis abstract and bibliography	1	9
Vivien Thomas: Black Non-Doctor; A thesis presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School, Morgan State College, by Jessie Gladden, May 1973.	1	10
Letter to Dr. Roland McConnell, Chairman, Department of History, Morgan State College from Roy Hunter, Jr., Chairman, Biology Department, re: thesis, April 10, 1972.	1	11
Subseries 2: Letters to Jessie Gladden in response to her inquiries	**Box** 2	**Folder** 12-21
	Box	**Folder**
George D. Zuidema, M.D., Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, March 2, 1972.	2	12
Mark M. Ravitch, M.D., University of Pittsburgh School Medicine, March 3, 1972.	2	13

William P. Longmire, Jr., M.D., University of California School of Medicine, March 10, 1972.	2	14
Rowena Spencer, M.D., New Orleans, LA, March 31, 1972.	2	15
Robert Okin, American Heart Association, Inc., April 11, 1972.	2	16
Richard Warren, M.D., American Medical Association, April 18, 1972.	2	17
Loyal Davis, M.D., Surgery, Gynecology & Obstetrics, Official Scientific Journal of the American College of Surgeons, April 18, 1972.	2	18
Bob Gee, portrait painter, May 8, 1972.	2	19
Jerome Harold Kay, M.D., Los Angeles, CA, May 9, 1972.	2	20
Denton A. Cooley, M.D., Texas Heart Institute, Houston, TX, May 29, 1972.	2	21

Subseries 3: Thesis publication	**Box** 2	**Folder** 22-26
	Box	**Folder**
List of publishers, 1972-73.	2	22
Letter sent to publishers by Jessie Gladden. (15 Copies)	2	23
Response from Simon & Schuster	2	24

Response from Ebony magazine	2	25
Thesis publication statement from Johns Hopkins	2	26
Series IV: Spark Media	**Box** 2	**Folder** 27-29
	Box	**Folder**
Proposal from SPARK Media for “Partners: Heart to Heart.”	2	27
Accompanying letter to Jessie Gladden from Jane Lueders, SPARK Media, March 17, 1993.	2	28
Agreement between SPARK Media and Jessie Gladden regarding Vivien Thomas research, December 22, 1993.	2	29
Series V: Jessie Gladden papers, 1974-2005	**Box** 2	**Folder** 30-37
	Box	**Folder**
Letter from Jessie Gladden to Dr. King B. Cheek requesting honorary degree for Vivien Thomas, April 21, 1974.	2	30
News Release naming Jessie Gladden “outstanding Secondary Educators for 1975.”	2	31
Program for Annual Family Day, St. Paul Baptist Church, February 1983.	2	32
Letter to J.G. from Mark Hyman, Ph.D, November 13, 1991.	2	33
Letter to J.G. from Lynda Brown Everett, February 23, 1979.	2	34

Annotated agenda for talk by J.G., February 21, 1990	2	35
Handwritten remarks	2	36
Letter to J.G. from Linda Robertson, Vice President, Government, Community and Public Affairs, Johns Hopkins Institutions, January 24, 2005.	2	37

Series VI: Publications about Vivien Thomas, 1973-2007	**Box** 2	**Folder** 38-44
	Box	**Folder**
“Vivien Thomas runs Hopkins research lab.” The Baltimore Afro-American, March 10, 1973.	2	38
“Black Doctor Finally Recognized.” The Evening Sun, Baltimore, Friday, May 21, 1976.	2	39
“The man behind the surgeon.” The Sunday Sun, Baltimore, Maryland, May 23, 1976.	2	40
“Honored....” newspaper article, June 22, 1976.	2	41
Program for “Memorial Service for Vivien T. Thomas 1910-1985, November 27, 1985.	2	42
“Vivien Thomas, pioneer in surgical research, Dies.” (obituaries) The Sun, November 27, 1985.	2	43

“Non-Physicians Who Made a Mark” Milestones In Medicine: One Hundred Years of The Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions. Sun Magazine, May 28, 1989.	2	44
Series VII: Miscellaneous papers	**Box** 2	**Folder** 45-47
	Box	**Folder**
Handwritten note from Sue Greene (Morgan Professor, undated)	2	45
Handwritten notes in the hand of Vivien Thomas And copies of his notes re: biography of Dr. Blalock	2	46
“Dentist Had Hankering for Show Business”, The Washington Post, Sunday, November 11, 2007.(obit of Irving Sorkin, who wrote about Vivien Thomas) (not part of Jessie Gladden collection)	2	47